

One of the lunatics liberated by Pinel in 1792, had been incarcerated or secluded in a dark cell for 40 years. He was considered to be the most maniacal among the many patients under Pinel's care. Indeed, so violent was he that, with the aid of the iron manacles fastened to his wrists, he had actually killed one of his keepers.

The chains and irons fastened to him were subsequently removed, a waistcoat substituted, and his cell door was left open. The poor man made many attempts to stand, but his legs seemed useless. After many attempts, however, he managed to maintain his balance and, with tottering and faltering steps reached the door of his cell.

The first sight that met his eye was the heavens, and he cried out enthusiastically: "How beautiful." For the rest of the day he continued to walk about, the while he uttered exclamations of delight. Henceforth, he caused his keepers no more trouble, and later, he became extremely useful in the way patients in hospitals can be.

And so, with the abandonment of cruelty, thoughtlessness and viciousness, the virtues of care, sympathy and kindness came to be regarded as essential for a correct part of the treatment of the insane.

Thus began a new principle which was called "moral treatment," and this was claimed to be far more efficacious than drugs or stern discipline.

It is possible that psycho-therapy had been practised long before the time of Pinel and Tuke, but the credit of pointing out its importance, and giving clinical instances and evidences of its value must undoubtedly be theirs.

In order to protect the property of the insane, laws had to be made at a very early period. The first statute on the subject in England was passed during the reign of Edward II. Scotland passed theirs at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

In England, if an insane person possessed any property, which at that time meant land, the first duties of land were to the King and the country, so that if the person concerned should hold it from the King because of his insanity and incapacity to perform his duties, then the King had to resume possession or appoint another to take his place.

A formal inquiry would be made by a responsible person regarding the extent of his insanity. Should the subject be found quite incapable of managing his affairs, his nearest male relative took everything into his possession—patient as well.

As time went by, however, more care was bestowed upon individual cases, and so long as a person was not actually declared insane, or an idiot, he had the right to manage his own affairs. The only way in which he could be deprived of such right was a by a writ issued out of Chancery, authorising an inquiry to be held before a jury to decide whether he was a lunatic or not, the verdict being determined by them and carried out under the direction of the Chancellor. Sometimes, however, the juries avoided finding a verdict, and the method fell into disuse.

As many lunatics had no property, or property of a trifling nature, it was found necessary to provide asylums, all of which were more or less under the control of the Commissioner in Lunacy. Thus the county asylums provided for them, or hospitals founded by charitable donees.

Scotland is distinguished for its early care of the insane. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, every considerable town in that country had erected a royal chartered asylum for itself, maintained by the corporation bodies who made provision for all their insane each helping the other, rich and poor alike. The property was placed in charge of a "Curator Bonis," who was strictly responsible to the Court of Sessions.

(To be concluded)

Nursing Echoes.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY has been graciously pleased to appoint 171 nurses to be Queen's Nurses; 133 in England, 1 in Wales, 35 in Scotland and 2 in Northern Ireland.

We note the names of several Male Nurses in this list.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD EUSTACE PERCY will be President of the Health Congress which is being organised by the Royal Sanitary Institute at Hastings from April 28th to May 1st, 1953. He has held several high offices of State, including those of President of the Board of Education and Minister-without-Portfolio. For many years he was Member of Parliament for Hastings.

It is expected that over 2,000 delegates will attend the Health Congress from all parts of the world. The object of the Congress is to discuss problems relating to the health of the people. Papers will be presented by medical officers and doctors, engineers, architects, surveyors, veterinary surgeons, sanitary inspectors, chemists, health visitors and others, a number of the contributors coming from overseas. The delegates will also visit places of public health interest in Sussex.

In the best of times it was always a serious problem of how to keep and augment our precious savings, but the changed conditions of the day, in which the cost of living has risen far beyond our imagination and with it the fall in the value of money, unfortunately have resulted in much hardship and uncertainty. This state of affairs is especially applicable to retired nurses and those living on fixed incomes, of whom there are many, who, to meet present conditions have been compelled to draw on their hard earned savings to find alas! that their only capital is sadly dwindling away, or has entirely vanished!

In our profound sympathy with our colleagues in these tragic circumstances, we are cheered to learn of a new scheme of annuity now inaugurated by the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, in which most favourable terms are available: "for any amount at any age"—which we quote. The importance, therefore of putting your savings (small or large) to the best possible use, needs no emphasis, and can be most advantageously employed in producing a regular and assured income, through the purchase of an immediate annuity. The annuity (or pension), starts to accrue from the date of purchase, and the first proportionate payment is made on the first Quarter Day after purchase. Thereafter it is paid quarterly or half yearly as wished by the annuitant.

The exact return naturally depends upon age and the sum invested. Here are just two examples: for a nurse aged 60, each £100 paid would accrue an annuity of £7 18s. 2d. At the age of 70 each £100 would provide an annuity of £10 12s. 1d.

After death, should nurses wish to provide for a relative or friend, "Last Survivor Annuities" provide this need.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)